

REMARKS

Applicants are amending their claims in order to further clarify various aspects of the present invention, with respect to claims reading on the elected Species IV (see the Response filed August 30, 2004). Specifically, Applicants have amended claims 1-6 to delete recitation of the insulator layers being "on a semiconductor substrate"; and have further amended claims 1-6 to recite that the (one of the) via-stud and the wire is/are formed directly on inner surfaces of the (one of the) via-hole and the trench, through a barrier layer which is made of an inorganic compound or a high melting point metal. Claims 1-3 and 5 have been still further amended to recite that the one of the via-stud and the wire is/are formed of this metal. Note, for example, the paragraph bridging pages 7 and 8 of Applicants' specification, especially together with the first full paragraph on page 8 thereof.

In addition, claim 7 has been amended to be a dependent claim, dependent on claim 1; and, moreover, in light of recitation of a diameter of the via-stud in claim 7, claim 7 has been further amended to positively recite that the claimed device includes the via-stud.

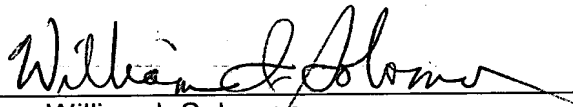
It is respectfully submitted that, of the claims presently in the above-identified application after entry of the present amendments, claims 1-7 read on the elected Species IV. In addition, Applicants again respectfully submit that at least claim 1 is generic to all of the embodiments as listed in the Office Action mailed June 29, 2004; that, moreover, the elected claims are generic to claims reading on the non-elected Species; and that upon allowance of claims 1-7, claims 8-20 should be re-joined in the above-identified application and allowed therein.

Entry of the present amendments, and, subsequent thereto, examination of the above-identified application in due course, are respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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